Model agent friend of Jeffrey Epstein charged with rape of a minor

A second complainant accuses Mr Brunel of drugging her drink and raping her when she was 17. Mr Brunel denies the charges

By Rebecca Rosman IN PARIS

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A French former modeling agent and friend of the late Jeffrey Epstein has been formally charged for a second time over the rape of a minor, according to a Paris prosecutor.

Jean-Luc Brunel, who is alleged to have helped procure women on behalf of Epstein and British socialite Ghislaine Maxwell, was indicted on June 29 for drugging and raping a 17-year-old girl in the late 1990s, according to a French judicial source and newspaper Le Parisien.

Mr Brunel has been in jail since Dec 2020 while awaiting trial for sexual harassment and the rape of minors over 15 years old.

An investigation by Le Parisien released Wednesday stated the new complaint was filed by a woman who accused Mr Brunel of drugging her drink and raping her at her Paris home after a night out clubbing when she was 17 years old. She now lives in the US.

In a statement to Le Parisien, Mr Brunel's lawyers maintained his innocence, denouncing what they called a "media lynching" of their client.

The 75-year-old has been the target of a wider investigation opened in Aug 2019 looking into Epstein's associates in France, and any potential offenses connected to the scandal.

Ghislaine Maxwell (second right), Jeffery Epstein (third left), Jean-Luc Brunel (second left)

Virginia Roberts Guiffre, the woman behind Mr Brunel's Dec 2020 indictment and one of Epstein's most prominent accusers, gave a close-door testimony to French prosecutors in late June.

Epstein killed himself in his Manhattan jail cell in early Aug 2019 while awaiting trial after being accused of sexually assaulting and trafficking dozens of girls. He faced up to 45 years in prison.

In a 2016 deposition, Ms Guiffre claimed that Epstein and Ms Maxwell sex trafficked her into Mr Brunel's hands when she was 16.

She also claimed Mr Brunel attacked her on several occasions on Epstein's private island in the Caribbean.

Speaking to NBC's "Dateline" last September, Ms Giuffre said Epstein told her he slept with "over a thousand women that Brunel brought in".

Earlier this year, Ms Giuffre urged more witnesses allegedly abused by Brunel to come forward.

"The judge is listening, the authorities are listening, I'm listening," Ms Giuffre told NBC News.

It comes as a group of former models on Thursday called on French lawmakers to reform the statute of limitations so old cases could be reopened, even if only for a limited period.

The women claim to have been sexually assaulted or raped by their French model agents more than 20 years ago and say "rape should not have an expiration date".

Gérald Marie, former boss of one of the world's top modelling agencies, pictured here at work in 2001 | CREDIT: Pascal Guyot/Getty

French authorities are also investigating Gerald Marie, one of the world's biggest model agents. Fourteen women have already given statements alleging sexual assault or rape against him.

Gerald Marie said in a statement, he "refutes with dismay these false and defamatory allegations".

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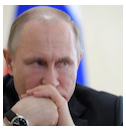

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